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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 280708

NODIS
EYES ONLY FOR AMB RALPH EARLE, USSALT DELEGATION

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 18816, SENT SECSTATE 10 NOV

QUOTE S E C R E T BONN 18816

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FROM LESLIE GELB

E.O. 11652: XGDS-L
TAGS: PARM, GW
SUBJECT: SALT CONSULTATIONS

1. FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF MOST IMMEDIATE ATTENTION POINTS IN MY MEETING THIS MORNING WITH STATE UNDER-SECRETARY VAN WELL (ACCOMPANIED BY RUHFUS OF SCHMIDT'S OFFICE, ARMS CONTROL COMMISSIONER RUTH, AND GENERAL BRANDT). VAN WELL SAID ALL POINTS HE WOULD MAKE WERE AT DIRECTION OF HIS GOVERNMENTS SECURITY COUNCIL CHAIRED BY CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WHICH MET YESTERDAY.

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2. AT THE INVERTED TIP OF VON WELL'S LENGTHY HEGELIAN-LIKE TRIANGLE WERE TWO POINTS:

-- A PROPOSAL TO HAVE A FOUR POWER MEETING ON GREY AREA SYSTEMS IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS AT THE LATEST, AND

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-- THE IMPLICATION THAT UNLESS THIS MATTER WAS SATISFACTORILY HANDLED, PERHAPS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SALT TWO DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES TO GOVERN THE CONDUCT OF SALT THREE, THE PROSPECTIVE SALT TWO AGREEMENT WAS BOUND TO BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE IN WESTERN EUROPE.

3. VAN WELL MADE IT CLEAR AT THE OUTSET THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS WHOLEHEARTEDLY IN FAVOR OF A SALT TWO TREATY, THAT THEY DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN US POLITICS, AND THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD WANT TO BE THE LAST TO BE SEEN IN OPPOSITION. BUT POINT IS THAT EVEN AFTER I DETAILED WAYS IN WHICH WE WERE SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATING US/EUROPEAN INTERESTS IN SALT TWO AND AFTER POINTEDLY ASKING WHETHER HE WAS TALKING ABOUT A FUTURE OR A CURRENT SALT MATTER, HE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT SIMPLY DIVORCE SALT TWO FROM SALT THREE.

4. OTHER MAJOR POINT OF INTEREST VAN WELL MADE IN LATER ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATION. HE SAID "THE CRUISE MISSILE TRANSFER ISSUE DOES NOT REPEAT NOT ARISE DIRECTLY FOR WEST GERMANY. THAT ISSUE IS OF DIRECT INTEREST TO BRITAIN AND FRANCE. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE THEATRE NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL FORCE BALANCES."

5. VAN WELL MADE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS WITH REGARD TO HIS PROPOSAL FOR A PROMPT FOUR-POWER MEETING:

-- MEETING SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT HIGHEST OFFICIAL LEVEL, WITH VAN WELL TO BE GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE AND WITH US, FRENCH, AND BRITISH REPRESENTATIVES FAMILIAR WITH AND EMPOWERED TO SPEAK ON THE SUBJECT.

-- DISCUSSION WOULD COVER SUBSTANCE AND PROCEDURE OF HANDLING GREY AREA SYSTEMS.

-- OUTCOME OF SUCH A MEETING COULD BE POSITION US SHOULD TAKE IN SALT TWO DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES REGARDING INCLUSION OF FBS AND CRUISE MISSILES AS AGAINST SOVIET THEATER NUCLEAR SYSTEMS, ESPECIALLY THE SSX-20 AND THE BACKFIRE.

-- OTHER OUTCOME COULD BE PERHAPS AGREEMENT TO SET UP NATO OR FOUR-POWER OR BILATERAL-TYPE BACKSTOPPING OPERATION FOR CONTINUED US-SOVIET BILATERAL IN SALT THREE OR ANOTHER KIND OF ALLIANCE FORUM TO NEGOTIATE THESE MATTERS WITH THE SOVIETS.

-- FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER IS MAKING THIS PROPOSAL

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TODAY TO FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER GUIRANGUAD.

6. VAN WELL ASKED ME WHETHER WE HAD GIVEN ANY STUDY TO THIS SUBJECT AND I RESPONDED IN THE NEGATIVE. I SAID THE SUBJECT WAS PERHAPS THE MOST COMPLEX IMAGINABLE AND THAT MY PERSONAL GUESS WAS THAT IT WOULD TAKE A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF STUDY BEFORE WE COULD HAVE ANYTHING EXCEPT A GENERAL DISCUSSION OF PROBLEMS AND POSSIBILITIES. HE ASKED ME WHAT THE FRENCH AND BRITISH VIEWS MIGHT BE ABOUT SUCH A MEETING. I RESPONDED THAT MY GUESS WAS THE FRENCH WOULD NOT BE ENTHUSIASTIC AND THAT I WOULDN'T EVEN GUESS ABOUT THE BRITISH. HE SAID IF THE FRENCH REJECTED THE PROPOSAL, HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD STILL WANT TO PROPOSE AND HOST SUCH A MEETING.
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HE ADDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WANTED A VERY RAPID RESPONSE TO THE PROPOSAL. I SAID THAT WE WOULD WANT TO THINK ABOUT THE MATTER AND WOULD ALSO WANT THE WEST GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO INFORM US ABOUT FRENCH AND BRITISH REACTIONS.

7. THE REST OF VAN WELL'S PRESENTATION WAS ALL ALONG THE LINES OF SCHMIDT'S IISS SPEECH. WHILE HE WAS CLEARLY RELIEVED TO HEAR OF OUR SUCCESS IN NEGOTIATING 2500 KMS CRUISE MISSILE RANGE TESTING PROVISIONS AND LIMITS ON BACKFIRE PRODUCTION, THIS WAS CLEARLY NOT ENOUGH TO GET THEM TO RETHINK THEIR PROPOSAL. HE DID SAY, HOWEVER, "THAT I WISH WE HAD KNOWN THESE THINGS BEFORE THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING YESTERDAY. IT WOULD HAVE HELPED THE DISCUSSION."

8. MY PITCH WAS EXACTLY ALONG THE LINES I DID IN LONDON AND PARIS, AGAIN WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON HOW WE ARE SEEKING TO MEET EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN INTERESTS AND NOT JUST US CONCERNS, IN SALT. THE ONLY ISSUE WHICH VAN WELL AND THE OTHERS DWELLED UPON AT ANY LENGTH WAS NON-CIRCUMVENTION. HE SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE OPPOSED TO ADDING THE "NOT THROUGH THIRD PARTIES" PHRASE TO THE NON-CIRCUMVENTION LANGUAGE ALREADY TABLED IN GENEVA. HE PRESSED FOR SPECIFICS ABOUT OUR THINKING ON THIS SUBJECT. I RESPONDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT KNEW EVERYTHING THAT HAD TRANSPIRED BETWEEN US AND THE SOVIETS, THAT THE ONLY THING WE HAD DONE WAS TO TABLE THE NON-CIRCUMVENTION LANGUAGE THEY WERE FAMILIAR WITH, THAT WE HAD GIVEN THE SOVIETS NO INDICATION OF THE FALLBACK LANGUAGE, THAT WE HAD DONE NO WORK OURSELVES ON THE DETAILS, THAT IT WOULD NOT BE IN OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS TO PRESS QUESTIONS OF SPECIFICITY AT THIS TIME, AND THAT
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OUR GOVERNMENT WOULD CONTINUE TO LIVE UP TO ITS PLEDGE
TO HAVE FULL CONSULTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT.

9. IN THE ONE-ON-ONE TALK WITH VAN WELL, I PRAISED
SCHMIDT'S RECENT SPEECH FOR ITS BREADTH AND THOUGHFUL-
NESS. I ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT IN MY PRIOR STOPS IN
EUROPE A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS HAD BEEN RAISED ABOUT THE
SPEECH. ONE QUESTION WAS WHETHER SCHMIDT WAS
SAYING THAT THE PROSPECTIVE SALT II AGREEMENT WAS
CREATING NEW THEATER AND CONVENTIONAL FORCE IMBALANCES.
I SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT REPEAT NOT MY READING OF THE
SPEECH. VAN WELL RESPONDED THAT MY READING WAS CORRECT,
"THAT SALT II DID NOT CAUSE THESE IMBALANCES, BUT IT
DID HIGHLIGHT THEM." I SAID THE SECOND QUESTION BEING
RAISED CONCERNED SCHMIDT'S ASSERTION THAT STRATEGIC
PARITY BETWEEN THE US AND THE SOVIET UNION WAS NEW.
I ARGUED THAT IN THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL WAYS THE CURRENT
STRATEGIC BALANCE WAS NO DIFFERENT IN ITS EFFECTS ON
THE THEATER AND CONVENTIONAL BALANCES THAN BEFORE. I
POINTED TO THE FACT THAT IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN THE NATO
VIEW THAT WE NEED NOT HAVE PRECISE KINDS OF BALANCES
AT THE THEATER AND CONVENTIONAL LEVELS BECAUSE THE
ASSUMPTION OF OUR STRATEGY WAS THAT A SOVIET CONVEN-
TIONAL ATTACK, IF SUCCESSFUL, WOULD INVOKE A US
NUCLEAR RESPONSE. I ADDED THAT THE KEY ISSUES WERE
WHETHER OUR CREDIBILITY TO DO SO WAS STILL INTACT AND
WHETHER WE STILL MAINTAINED THE CAPABILITY EVEN WITH
SALT II LIMITATIONS TO HIT ALL NECESSARY TARGETS.
HE SAID IT WASN'T A QUESTION OF OUR CREDIBILITY OR OUR
CAPABILITY, BUT A MATTER OF PERCEPTIONS. I EVEN
POINTED OUT THAT THIS NEW AGREEMENT WOULD END THE
PERCEPTION OF INEQUALITY GENERATED BY THE INTERIM
AGREEMENT. WE DANCED BACK AND FORTH ON THIS MANY
DIFFERENT WAYS OVER A LONG TIME TO NO AGREEMENT.
STOESSEL UNQUOTE. CHRISTOPHER

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